

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES
August 7, 2024

Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, August 7, 2024, at 5:01 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a Work Session.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

PRESENT: Todd Johnson, Chairman
Robert Shealy, Vice-Chairman
Leon Fulmer, Council Member
Les Hipp, Council Member
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member
Karl Sease, Council Member
Jeff Shacker, County Administrator
Debbie Cromer, Finance Director
Eric Nieto, I.T. Director
Scott Sawyer, Special Projects Coordinator

ABSENT: Travis Reeder, Council Member

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

1. Discussion of the South Carolina Community Development Block Grant program and the possible submission of a funding request in September 2024.
 - Mr. Shacker said the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) has been beneficial to Newberry County in particular, the City of Newberry and Town of Whitmire have utilized the grant to benefit the community. A variety of projects can be completed

utilizing the grant, both Whitmire and Newberry have used the grant with rehabbing their water and sewer and improvements in their downtown areas. Newberry County Government is also eligible to utilize the grant.

- Mr. Shacker said they have the ability to have two grants at one time, adding there is a threshold requirement, and they cannot exceed the threshold. However, he said the county is limited in where they can use those funds as this is HUD money that is distributed to the states, and the S.C. Department of Commerce is distributing the funds as a competitive grants program. The funds can only be used to benefit low- and moderate-income communities and or direct beneficiaries that are low and moderate income. To qualify, your household income levels can be no greater than 80% of the county median household income. Unless you qualify at the community level, which has to be 51% or greater low- and moderate-income.
- Mr. Shacker asked how receptive council would be to submitting a request for an application.
- Mr. Shealy asked if it were something the county would not have to take, if they are awarded, to which Mr. Shacker said no, you would not have to accept. Mr. Shealy also asked if there is a timeline that must be followed for a project to be completed, if the county got the grant; Mr. Shacker said they'd have 24 months, but they can request an extension.
- Mr. Shacker said the concept staff would propose to council, and staff has discussed this with the Town of Whitmire, would be to create a connection with the sidewalks, additional parking, lighting, some landscaping, running from Market Street down to Glenn, connection along Gilliam and tie in with the Gary Street project the county is currently doing. The town has interest in pursuing funding to renovate the local community center.
- Mr. Johnson said his first concern before they started any discussions with the CDBG was if they go in Whitmire and do something and not in other municipalities, the grant statistics really only allow in Whitmire. He and Mr. Shacker had a

conversation with the Whitmire mayor, and the town would have to be part of that match, as well. Mr. Johnson said the CTC did the match for the sidewalk project for the county, and maybe they would fund the match again.

- Mr. Fulmer asked if these are state roads, to which Mr. Johnson answered in the affirmative.
- Mr. Johnson reiterated if the county looks into this, and they are awarded the grant but everyone else says no, the county can decline.
- Mr. Sease asked what the percentage match is; Mr. Shacker said it is a 90/10 match with a maximum of \$750,000.
- Mr. Shacker said staff thought this was a great opportunity to connect all these key facilities downtown and connect to the current projects.
- Mr. Shealy said he thinks it is a great idea.
- Mr. Johnson said it seems unanimous to go ahead and do the investigation and ask for the application and move forward from there. Mr. Shacker said they will go ahead and get an estimate of the cost of the project and request the application. The application, if awarded, would be due in late September and the county would need to pass a resolution committing to the local match.

2. Discussion of the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the possible submission of a request for funding through the SCRC's Competitive Grants program.

- Mr. Shacker said, regarding the CPST amphitheater project, a benefit to the project – to which the City of Newberry agrees – would be to establish some physical connections with Caldwell and McKibben streets. The thought was to shave some of the expenses off the CPST project and cover them with the grant. However, they discovered CDBG is not available for the City of Newberry, due to income levels.

- There is a new entity, Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, with a grant program that they awarded projects a few weeks ago. Mr. Shacker said a few of those projects were streetscapes, like they are discussing around the amphitheater. He said the grant would be less than CDBG and they may not be able to do both McKibben and Caldwell, but if council is comfortable staff can make plans to address Caldwell Street. He said the concept they discussed with the City of Newberry would be paving the street, installing a very wide sidewalk, decorative lights, street trees, and some electrical work.
- Mr. Shealy asked if this grant was an 80/20, Mr. Shacker said he thinks this one is also 90/10.
- Mr. Hipp said that would more than offset the savings from CPST, Mr. Shealy asked if the City of Newberry would help with the match, to which Mr. Shacker said the city seemed receptive.
- Mr. Hipp said the amphitheater is a joint project between the city and county, and although Caldwell Street is a state-owned street, that will be a major access to the amphitheater and anything they can do there to help.
- Mr. Johnson complimented Mr. Shacker on the information he was able to provide the council on these grants and the vision to see the need and where to apply it. Mr. Shealy added anytime you can find free money, they'll take it.
- Mr. Shacker said they would come back to council before they move forward with the grant.

3. Executive Session:

a. Contractual Matter(s):

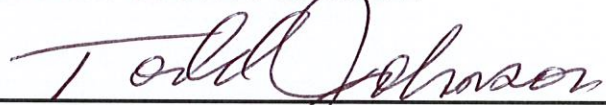
- i. Discussion of matters related to the sale of real estate pursuant to SC Code of Laws Section 30-4-70(a)(2).
 - Mr. Sease made a motion to go into Executive Session; Mr. Shealy provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

- Newberry County Council went into Executive Session at 5:27 p.m.
- Mr. Shealy made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 5:59 p.m.; Mr. Sease provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

4. Adjournment.

- Mr. Sease made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Hipp provided the second and the motion carried 6-0 at 6:00 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



Todd Johnson, Chairman



Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: _____

8-21-24